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THE AMBASSADORS.

BY HENRY JAMES.

PART II.

IV.

THOSE occasions on which Strether was, in association with the exile from Milrose, to see the sacred rage glimmer through would doubtless have their due periodicity; but our friend had meanwhile to find names for many other matters. On no evening of his life perhaps, as he reflected, had he had to supply so many as on the third of his short stay in London; an evening spent, by Miss Gostrey's side, at one of the theatres, to which he had found himself transported, without his own hand raised, on the mere expression of a conscientious wonder. She knew her theatre, she knew her play, as she had known, triumphantly, for three days, everything else, and the moment filled to the brim, for her companion, that apprehension of the interesting which, whether or no the interesting happened to filter through his guide, strained now to its limits his brief opportunity. Waymarsh had not come with them; he had seen plays enough, he signified, before Strether had joined him—an affirmation that had its full force when his friend ascertained by questions that he had seen two and a circus. Questions as to what he had seen had on him indeed an effect only less favorable than questions as to what he hadn't. He liked the former to be discriminated; but how could it be done, Strether asked of their constant counsellor, without discriminating the latter?

Miss Gostrey had dined with him at his hotel, face to face over a small table on which the lighted candles had rose-colored shades; and the rose-colored shades and the small table and the soft fragrance of the lady—had anything to his mere sense ever been so soft?—were so many touches in he scarce knew what positive high picture. He had been to the theatre, even to the opera, in Boston, with Mrs. Newsome, and been more than once her only escort; but there had been no little confronted dinner, no pink lights, no whiff of vague sweetness, as a preliminary: one of the results of which fact was that at present, mildly rueful, though with a sharpish accent, he actually asked himself *why* there hadn't. There was much

the same difference in his impression of the noticed state of his companion, whose dress was "cut down," as he believed the term to be, in respect to shoulders and bosom, in a manner quite other than Mrs. Newsome's and who wore round her throat a broad red velvet band with an antique jewel—he was rather complacently sure it was antique—attached to it in front. Mrs. Newsome's dress was never in any degree "cut down," and she never wore round her throat a broad red velvet band: if she had, moreover, would it ever have served so to carry and complicate, as he now almost felt, his vision?

It would have been absurd of him to trace into ramifications the effect of the ribbon from which Miss Gostrey's trinket depended, had he not, for the hour, at the best, been so given over to uncontrolled perceptions. What was it but an uncontrolled perception that his friend's velvet band somehow added, in her appearance, to the value of every other item—to that of her smile and of the way she carried her head, to that of her complexion, of her lips, her teeth, her eyes, her hair? What, certainly, had a man conscious of a man's work in the world to do with red velvet bands? He wouldn't, for anything, have so exposed himself as to tell Miss Gostrey how much he liked hers; yet he *had*, none the less, not only caught himself in the act—frivolous, no doubt, idiotic, and above all unexpected—of liking it: he had, in addition, taken it as a starting-point for fresh backward, fresh forward, fresh lateral flights. The manner in which Mrs. Newsome's throat *was* encircled suddenly represented for him, in an alien order, almost as many things as the manner in which Miss Gostrey's was. Mrs. Newsome wore, at operatic hours, a black silk dress—very handsome, he knew it was "handsome"—and an ornament that his memory was able further to identify as a *ruche*. He had his association indeed with the *ruche*, but it was rather imperfectly romantic. He had once said to the wearer—and it was as "free" a remark as he had ever made to her—that she looked, with her ruff and other matters, like Queen Elizabeth; and it had after this, in truth, been his fancy that, as a consequence of that tenderness and an acceptance of the idea, the form of this special tribute to the "frill" had grown slightly more marked. The connection, as he sat there and let his imagination roam, was to strike him as vaguely pathetic; but there it all was, and pathetic was doubtless, in the conditions, the best thing it could possibly be. It had existed, assuredly, at any rate; for it seemed now to come over him that no gentleman of his age, at Woollett, could ever, to a lady of Mrs. Newsome's, which was not much less than his, have embarked on such a simile.

All sorts of things in fact now seemed to come over him, comparatively few of which his chronicler can hope for space to mention. It came over him for instance that Miss Gostrey looked perhaps like Mary Stuart: Lambert Strether had a candor of fancy which could rest for an instant gratified in such an antithesis. It came

over him that never before—no, literally, never—had a lady dined with him at a public place before going to the play. The publicity of the place was just, in the matter, for Strether, the rare, strange thing; it affected him almost as the achievement of privacy might have affected a man of a different experience. He had married, in the far-away years, so young as to have missed the natural time, in Boston, for taking girls to the Museum; and it was absolutely true of him that—even after the close of the period of conscious detachment occupying the centre of his life, the gray middle desert of the two deaths, that of his wife and that, ten years later, of his boy—he had never taken any one anywhere. It came over him in especial—though the monition had, as happened, already sounded, fitfully gleamed, in other forms—that the business he had come out on had not yet been so brought home to him as by the sight of the people about him. She gave him the impression, his friend, at first, more straight than he got it for himself—gave it simply by saying with off-hand illumination: “Oh yes, they’re types!”—but after he had taken it he made to the full, both while he kept silence for the four acts and while he talked in the intervals, his own use of it. It was an evening, it was a world of types, and this was a connection, above all, in which the figures and faces in the stalls were interchangeable with those on the stage.

He felt as if the play itself penetrated him with the naked elbow of his neighbor, a great stripped, handsome, red-haired lady, who conversed with a gentleman on her other side in stray dissyllables which had for his ear, in the oddest way in the world, so much sound that he wondered they hadn’t more sense; and he recognized by the same law, beyond the footlights, what he was pleased to take for the very flush of English life. He had distracted drops in which he couldn’t have said if it were actors or auditors who were most true, and the upshot of which, each time, was the consciousness of new contacts. However he viewed his job, it was “types” he should have to tackle. Those before him and around him were not as the types of Woollett, where, for that matter, it had begun to seem to him that there must only have been the male and the female. These made two exactly, even with the individual varieties. Here, on the other hand, apart from the personal and the sexual range—which might be greater or less—a series of strong stamps had been applied, as it were, from without; stamps that his observation played with as, before a glass case on a table, it might have passed from medal to medal and from copper to gold. It befell that in the drama, precisely, there was a bad woman, in a yellow frock, who made a pleasant, weak, good-looking young man, in perpetual evening dress, do the most dreadful things. Strether felt himself, on the whole, not afraid of the yellow frock, but he was vaguely anxious over a certain kindness into which he found himself drifting for its victim. He hadn’t come out, he reminded himself, to be too kind, or indeed to be kind at all, to Chadwick New-

some. Would Chad also be in perpetual evening dress? He somehow rather hoped it—it seemed so to add to *this* young man's general amenability; though he wondered too if, to fight him with his own weapons, he himself (a thought almost startling,) would have likewise to be. This young man, furthermore, would have been much more easy to handle—at least for *him*—than appeared probable in respect to Chad.

It came up for him with Miss Gostrey that there were things of which she would really perhaps, after all, have heard; and she admitted when a little pressed that she was never quite sure of what she heard as distinguished from things such as, on occasions like the present, she only extravagantly guessed. "I seem, with this freedom, you see, to have guessed Mr. Chad. He's a young man on whose head, at Woollett, high hopes are placed, whom a wicked woman has got hold of, and whom his family, over there, have sent you out to rescue. You've accepted the mission of separating him from the wicked woman. Are you quite sure she's very bad for him?"

Something in his manner showed it as quite pulling him up. "Of course we are. Wouldn't *you* be?"

"Oh, I don't know. One never does—does one?—beforehand. One can only judge on the facts. Yours are quite new to me; I'm really not in the least, as you see, in possession of them; so it will be awfully interesting to have them from you. If you're satisfied, that's all that's required. I mean if you're sure that you *are* sure: sure that it won't do."

"That he should lead such a life? Rather!"

"Oh, but I don't know, you see, about his life; you've not told me about his life. She may be charming—his life!"

"Charming?"—Strether stared before him. "She's base, venal—out of the streets."

"I see. And *he*—?"

"Chad, wretched boy?"

"Of what type and temper is he?" she went on as Strether had hesitated.

"Well—the obstinate." It was as if for a moment he had been going to say more and had then controlled himself.

That was scarce what she wished. "Do you like him?"

This time he was prompt. "No. How *can* I?"

"Do you mean because of your being so saddled with him?"

"I'm thinking of his mother," said Strether after a moment. "He has darkened her admirable life." He spoke with austerity. "He has worried her half to death."

"Oh, that's of course odious." She had a pause as if for renewed emphasis of this truth, but it ended on another note. "Is her life very admirable?"

"Extraordinarily."

There was so much in the tone that Miss Gostrey had to devote

another pause to the appreciation of it. "And has he only *her*? I don't mean the bad woman in Paris," she quickly added—"for I assure you I shouldn't, even at the best, be disposed to allow him more than one. But has he only his mother?"

"He has also a sister, older than himself and married; and they're both remarkably fine women."

"Very handsome, you mean?"

This promptitude—almost, as he might have thought, this precipitation, gave him a brief drop; but he came up again. "Mrs. Newsome, I think, is handsome, though she's not, of course, with a son of twenty-eight and a daughter of thirty, in her very first youth. She married, however, extremely young."

"And is wonderful," Miss Gostrey asked, "for her age?"

Strether seemed to feel with a certain disquiet the pressure of it. "I don't say she's wonderful. Or rather," he went on the next moment, "I do say it. It's exactly what she *is*—wonderful. But I wasn't thinking of her appearance," he explained—"striking as that doubtless is. I was thinking—well, of many other things." He seemed to look at these as if to mention some of them; then took, pulling himself up, another turn. "About Mrs. Pocock people may differ."

"Is that the daughter's name—'Pocock'?"

"That's the daughter's name," Strether sturdily confessed.

"And people may differ, you mean, about *her* beauty?"

"About everything."

"But *you* admire her?"

He gave his friend a glance as to show how he could bear this. "I'm perhaps a little afraid of her."

"Oh," said Miss Gostrey, "I see her from here! You may say then I see very fast and very far, but I've already shown you I do. The young man and the two ladies," she went on, "are at any rate all the family?"

"Quite all. His father has been dead ten years, and there's no brother, nor any other sister. They'd do," said Strether, "anything in the world for him."

"And you'd do anything in the world for *them*?"

He shifted again; she had made it perhaps just a shade too affirmative for his nerves. "Oh, I don't know!"

"You'd do at any rate this, and the 'anything' they'd do is represented by their *making* you do it."

"Ah, they couldn't have come—either of them. They're very busy people, and Mrs. Newsome, in particular, has a large, full life. She's moreover highly nervous—and she's not strong."

"You mean she's a bad invalid?"

He carefully distinguished. "There's nothing she likes less than to be called one. But she's delicate, sensitive, high-strung. She puts so much of herself into everything—"

Ah, Maria knew these things. "That she has nothing left for any-

thing else? Of course she hasn't. To whom do you say it? High-strung? Don't I spend my life, for them, jamming down the pedal? I see moreover how it has told on you."

Strether took this more lightly. "Oh, I jam down the pedal too!"

"Well," she lucidly returned, "we must from this moment bear on it together with all our might." And she reappeared further on. "Have they money?"

But it was as if, while her energetic image still held him, her inquiry fell short. "Mrs. Newsome," he wished further to explain, "hasn't moreover your courage on the question of contact. If she had come it would have been to see the person herself."

"The woman? Ah, but that's courage."

"No—it's exaltation, which is a very different thing. Courage," he, however, accommodatingly threw out, "is what *you* have."

She shook her head. "You say that only to patch me up—to cover the nudity of my want of exaltation. I've neither the one nor the other. I've mere battered indifference. I see that what you mean," Miss Gostrey pursued, "is that if your friend *had* come she would take great views, and the great views, to put it simply, would be too much for her."

Strether looked amused at her notion of the simple, but he adopted her formula. "Everything's too much for her."

"Ah then, such a service as this of yours—"

"Is more for her than anything else? Yes—far more. But so long as it isn't too much for *me*—!"

"Her condition doesn't matter? Surely not; we leave her condition out; we take it, that is, for granted. I see it, her condition, as behind and beneath you; yet at the same time I see it as bearing you up."

"Oh, it does bear me up!" Strether laughed.

"Well then, as yours bears *me*, nothing more is needed." With which she put again her question. "Has Mrs. Newsome money?"

This time he heeded. "Oh, plenty. That's the root of the evil. There's money, in quantities, in the concern. Chad has had the free use of a great deal. But if he'll pull himself together and come home, all the same, he'll find his account in it."

She had listened with all her interest. "And I hope to goodness you'll find yours!"

"He'll take up his definite material reward," said Strether without acknowledgment of this. "He's at the parting of the ways. He can come into the business now—he can't come later."

"Is there a business?"

"Lord, yes—a big, brave, bouncing business. A roaring trade."

"A great shop?"

"Yes—a workshop; a great production, a great industry. The concern's a manufacture—and a manufacture that, if it's only properly looked after, may well be on the way to become a monopoly."

It's a little thing they make—make better, it appears, than other people can, or than other people, at any rate, do. Mr. Newsome, being a man of ideas, at least in that particular line," Strether explained, "put them on it with great effect, and gave the place altogether, in his time, an immense lift."

"It's a place in itself?"

"Well, quite a number of buildings; almost a little industrial colony. But above all it's a thing. The article produced."

"And what *is* the article produced?"

Strether looked about him as in slight reluctance to say; then the curtain, which he saw about to rise, came to his aid. "I'll tell you next time." But when the next time came he only said he would tell her later on—after they should have left the theatre; for she had immediately reverted to their topic, and even for himself the picture of the stage was now overlaid with another image. His postponements, however, made her wonder—wonder if the article referred to were anything bad. And she explained that she meant improper or ridiculous or wrong. But Strether, so far as that went, could satisfy her. "Unmentionable? Oh no, we constantly talk of it; we are quite familiar and brazen about it. Only, as a small, trivial, rather ridiculous object of the commonest domestic use, it's rather wanting in—what shall I say? Well, dignity, or the least approach to distinction. Just here, therefore, with everything about us so grand—!" In short he shrank.

"It's a false note?"

"Sadly. It's vulgar."

"But surely not vulgarer than this." Then on his wondering as she herself had done: "Than everything about us." She seemed a trifle irritated. "What do you take this for?"

"Why, for—comparatively—divine!"

"This dreadful London theatre? It's impossible, if you really want to know."

"Oh then," laughed Strether, "I *don't* really want to know!"

It made between them a pause, which, she, however, still fascinated by the mystery of the production at Woollett, presently broke. "Rather ridiculous? Clothes-pins? Saleratus? Shoe-polish?"

It brought him round. "No—you don't even 'burn.' I don't think, you know, you'll guess it."

"How then can I judge how vulgar it is?"

"You'll judge when I do tell you"—and he persuaded her to patience. But it may even now frankly be mentioned that he, in the sequel, never *was* to tell her. He actually never did so, and it moreover oddly occurred that, by the law, within her, of the incalculable, her desire for the information dropped, and her attitude to the question converted itself into a positive cultivation of ignorance. In ignorance she could humor her fancy, and that proved a useful freedom. She could treat the little nameless object as indeed unnameable—she could make their abstention enormously

definite. There might indeed have been for Strether the portent of this in what she next said.

"Is it perhaps then because it's so bad—because your industry, as you call it, *is* so vulgar—that Mr. Chad won't come back? Does he feel the taint? Is he staying away not to be mixed up in it?"

"Oh," Strether laughed, "it wouldn't appear—would it—that he feels 'taints'! He's glad enough of the money from it, and the money's his whole basis. There's appreciation in that—I mean as to the allowance his mother has hitherto made him. She has of course the resource of cutting this allowance off; but even then he has, unfortunately, and on no small scale, in money left him by his grandfather, her own father, his independent supply."

"Wouldn't the fact you mention then," Miss Gostrey asked, "make it, precisely, more easy for him to be particular? Isn't he conceivable as fastidious about the source—the apparent and public source—of his income?"

Strether was able quite good-humoredly to entertain the proposition. "The source of his grandfather's wealth—and thereby of his own share in it—was not particularly noble."

"And what source was it?"

Strether hesitated. "Well—practices."

"In business? Infamies? He was an old swindler?"

"Oh," Strether said with more emphasis than spirit, "I sha'n't describe *him* nor narrate his exploits."

"Lord, what abysses! And the late Mr. Newsome then?"

"Well, what about him?"

"Was he like the grandfather?"

"No—he was on the other side of the house. And he was different."

Miss Gostrey kept it up. "Better?"

Her friend for a moment hung fire. "No."

Her comment on his hesitation was scarce the less marked for being mute. "Thank you. *Now* don't you see," she went on, "why the boy doesn't come home? He's drowning his shame."

"His shame? What shame?"

"What shame? *Comment donc? The shame.*"

"But where and when," Strether asked, "is '*the shame*'—where is any shame—to-day? The men I speak of—they did as every one does; and—besides being ancient history—it was all a matter of appreciation."

She showed how she understood. "Mrs. Newsome has appreciated?"

"Ah, I can't speak for *her*!"

"In the midst of such doings—and, as I understand you, profiting by them, she at least has remained exquisite?"

"Oh, I can't talk of *her*!" Strether said.

"I thought she was just what you *could* talk of. You *don't* trust me," Miss Gostrey after a moment declared.

It had its effect. "Well, her money is spent, her life conceived and carried on with a large beneficence—"

"That's a kind of expiation of wrongs? Gracious," she added before he could speak, "how intensely you make me see her!"

"If you see her," Strether dropped, "it's all that's necessary."

She really seemed to have her. "I feel that. She *is*, in spite of everything, handsome."

This at least enlivened him. "What do you mean by everything?"

"Well, I mean *you*." With which she had one of her swift changes of ground. "You say the concern needs looking after; but doesn't Mrs. Newsome look after it?"

"So far as possible. She's wonderfully able, but it's not her affair, and her life's a good deal overcharged. She has many, many things."

"And you also?"

"Oh yes—I've many too, if you will."

"I see. But what I mean is," Miss Gostrey amended, "do you also look after the business?"

"Oh no, I don't touch the business."

"Only everything else?"

"Well, yes—some things."

"As for instance—?"

Strether obligingly thought. "Well, the Review."

"The Review?—you have a Review?"

"Certainly, Woollett has a Review—which Mrs. Newsome, for the most part, magnificently pays for, and which I, not at all magnificently, edit. My name's on the cover," Strether pursued, "and I'm really rather disappointed and hurt that you seem never to have heard of it."

She neglected for a moment this grievance. "And what kind of a Review is it?"

His serenity was now completely restored. "Well, it's green."

"Do you mean in political color as they say here?—in thought."

"No; I mean the cover's green—of the most lovely shade."

"And with Mrs. Newsome's name on it too?"

He hesitated. "Oh, as for that, you must judge if she peeps out. She's behind the whole thing; but she's of a delicacy and a discretion—!"

Miss Gostrey took it all. "I'm sure. She *would* be. I don't underrate her. She must be rather a swell."

"Oh yes, she's rather a swell!"

"A Woollett swell—*bon!* I like the idea of a Woollett swell. And you must be rather one too, to be so mixed up with her."

"Ah no," said Strether, "that's not the way it works."

But she had already taken him up. "The way it works—you needn't tell me!—is of course that you efface yourself."

"With my name on the cover?" he lucidly objected.

"Ah, but you don't put it on for yourself."

"I beg your pardon—that's exactly what I do put it on for. It's exactly the thing that I'm reduced to doing for myself. It seems to rescue, a little, you see, from the wreck of hopes and ambitions, the refuse-heap of disappointments and failures, my one presentable little scrap of an identity."

She looked at him an instant, on this, as if to say many things; but what she at last simply said was: "She likes to see it there. You're the bigger swell of the two," she immediately continued, "because you think you're not one. She thinks she *is* one. However," Miss Gostrey added, "she thinks you're one too. You're at all events the biggest she can get hold of." She embroidered, she abounded. "I don't say it to interfere between you, but on the day she gets hold of a bigger one—!" Strether had thrown back his head as in silent mirth over something that struck him in her audacity or felicity; and her flight, meanwhile, was already higher. "Therefore close with her—!"

"Close with her?" he asked as she seemed to hang poised.

"Before you lose your chance."

Their eyes, with it, met a moment. "What do you mean by closing?"

"And what do I mean by your chance? I'll tell you when you tell me all the things *you* don't. Is it her *greatest* fad?" she briskly pursued.

"The Review?" He seemed to wonder how he could best describe it. This resulted, however, but in a sketch. "It's her tribute to the ideal."

"I see. You go in for tremendous things."

"We go in for the unpopular side—that is so far as we dare."

"And how far *do* you dare?"

"Well, she very far. I much less. I don't begin to have her faith. She provides," said Strether, "three-fourths of that. And she provides, as I've confided to you, *all* the money."

It evoked somehow a vision of gold that held for a little Miss Gostrey's eyes, and she looked as if she heard the bright dollars shovelled in. "I hope then you make a good thing—"

"I *never* made a good thing!" he promptly declared.

She just waited. "Don't you call it a good thing to be loved?"

"Oh, we're not loved. We're not even hated. We're only just sweetly ignored."

She had another pause. "You don't trust me!" she repeated.

"Don't I when I lift the last veil?—tell you the very secret of the prison-house?"

Again she met his eyes, but with the result that, after an instant, her own turned away with impatience. "You don't sell? Oh, I'm glad of *that*!" After which, however, and before he could protest, she was off again. "She's just a *moral* swell."

He accepted gayly enough the definition. "Yes—I really think that describes her."

But it had for his friend the oddest connection. "How does she do her hair?"

He laughed out. "Beautifully!"

"Ah, that doesn't tell me. However, it doesn't matter—I know. It's tremendously neat—a real reproach; quite remarkably thick and without, as yet, a single strand of white. There!"

He blushed for her realism, but he gaped at her truth. "You're the very deuce."

"What else *should* I be? It was as the very deuce I pounced upon you. But don't let it trouble you, for everything but the very deuce—at our age—is a bore and a delusion, and even he himself, after all, but half a joy." With which, on a single sweep of her wing, she resumed. "You assist her to expiate—which is rather hard when you've yourself not sinned."

"It's she who has not sinned," Strether returned. "I've sinned the most."

"Ah," Miss Gostrey cynically laughed, "what a picture of *her*! Have you robbed the widow and the orphan?"

"I've sinned enough," said Strether.

"Enough for whom? Enough for what?"

"Well, to be where I am."

"Thank you!" They were disturbed at this moment by the passage between their knees and the back of the seats before them of a gentleman who had been absent during a part of the performance and who now returned for the close; but the interruption left Miss Gostrey time, before the subsequent hush, to express as a sharp finality her sense of the moral of all their talk. "I knew you had something up your sleeve!" This finality, however, left them, in its turn, at the end of the play, as disposed to hang back as if they had still much to say; so that they easily agreed to let every one go before them—they found an interest in waiting. They made out from the lobby that the night had turned to rain; yet Miss Gostrey let her friend know that he was not to see her home. He was simply to put her, by herself, into a four-wheeler; she liked so, in London, of wet nights, after wild pleasures, thinking things over, on the return, in lonely four-wheelers. This was her great time, she intimated, for pulling herself together. The delays caused by the weather, the struggle for vehicles at the door, gave them occasion to subside on a divan at the back of the vestibule and just beyond the reach of the fresh, damp gusts from the street. Here Strether's comrade resumed that free handling of the subject to which his own imagination of it already owed so much.

"Does your young friend in Paris like you?"

It had almost, after the interval, startled him. "Oh, I hope not! Why *should* he?"

"Why shouldn't he?" Miss Gostrey asked. "That you're coming down on him need have nothing to do with it."

"You see more in it," he presently returned, "than I."

"Of course I see *you* in it."

"Well then, you see more in me!"

"Than you see in yourself? Very likely. That's always one's right. What I was thinking of," she explained, "is the possible particular effect on him of his *milieu*."

"Oh, his *milieu*—!" Strether really felt that he could now imagine it better than three hours before.

"Do you mean it can only have been so lowering?"

"Why, that's my very starting-point."

"Yes, but you start so far back. What do his letters say?"

"Nothing. He ignores us—or spares us. He doesn't write."

"I see. But there are, all the same," she went on, "two quite distinct things that—given the wonderful place he's in—may have happened to him. One is that he may have got brutalized. The other is that he may have got refined."

Strether stared—this *was* a novelty. "Refined?"

"Oh," she said quietly, "there *are* refinements."

The way of it made him, after looking at her, break into a laugh. "You have them!"

"As one of the signs," she continued in the same tone, "they constitute perhaps the worst."

He thought it over, and his gravity returned. "Is it a refinement not to answer his mother's letters?"

She hesitated. "Oh, I should say the greatest of all."

"Well," said Strether, "*I'm* quite content to let it, as one of the signs, pass for the worst that I know he believes he can do what he likes with me."

This appeared to strike her. "How do you know it?"

"Oh, I know it. I feel it in my bones."

"Feel that he *can* do it?"

"Feel that he believes he can. It may come to the same thing!" Strether laughed.

She wouldn't, however, have this. "Nothing, with you, will ever come to the same thing as anything else." And she understood what she meant, it seemed, sufficiently to go straight on. "You say that if he does break he'll come in for things at home?"

"Quite positively. He'll come in for a particular chance—a chance that any properly constituted young man would jump at. The business has so developed that an opening that scarcely existed three years ago, but which his father's will took account of as, in certain conditions, possible, attaching to Chad's availing himself of it a large contingent advantage—this opening, the conditions having come about, now simply waits for him. His mother has kept it for him, holding out against strong pressure, till the last possible moment. It requires, naturally, as it carries with it a handsome 'part,' a large share in profits, his being on the spot and making a big effort for a big result. That's what I mean by his chance. If he misses it he comes in, as you say, for nothing. And

to see that he doesn't miss it is, in a word, what I've come out for."

She let it all sink in. "What you've come out for then is simply to render him an immense service."

Poor Strether was willing to take it so. "Ah—if you like."

"He stands, as they say, if you succeed with him, to gain—"

"Oh, a lot of advantages." Strether had them, clearly, at his fingers' ends.

"By which you mean, of course, a lot of money."

"Well, not only. I'm acting with a sense, for him, of other things too. Consideration and comfort and security—the general safety of being anchored by a strong chain. He wants, as I see him, to be protected. Protected, I mean, from life."

"Ah *voilà!*"—her thought fitted with a click. "From life. What you *really* want to get him home for is to marry him."

"Well, that's about the size of it."

"Of course," she said, "it's rudimentary. But to any one in particular?"

He smiled at this—he looked a little more conscious. "You get everything out."

For a moment again their eyes met. "You put everything in!"

He acknowledged the tribute by telling her. "To Mamie Pocock."

She wondered; then gravely, even exquisitely, as if to make the oddity also fit: "His own niece?"

"Oh, you must yourself find a name for the relation. His brother-in-law's sister. Mrs. Jim's sister-in-law."

It seemed to have on Miss Gostrey a certain hardening effect. "And who in the world's Mrs. Jim?"

"Chad's sister—who was Sarah Newsome. She's married—didn't I mention it?—to Jim Pocock."

"Ah yes," she tacitly replied; but he had mentioned things! Then, however, with all the sound it could have, "Who in the world's Jim Pocock?" she asked.

"Why, Sally's husband. That's the only way we distinguish people at Woollett," he good-humoredly explained.

"And is it a great distinction—being Sally's husband?"

He considered. "I think there can be scarcely a greater—unless it may become one, in the future, to be Chad's wife."

"Then how do they distinguish *you*?"

"They *don't*—except, as I've told you, by the green cover."

Once more their eyes met on it, and she held him an instant. "The green cover won't—nor will *any* cover—avail you with *me*. You're of a depth of duplicity!" Still, she could in her own large grasp of truth condone it. "Is Mamie a great *parti*?"

"Oh, the greatest we have—our prettiest, brightest girl."

Miss Gostrey seemed to fix the poor child. "I know what they *can* be. And with money?"

"Not perhaps with a great deal of that—but with so much of

everything else that we don't miss it. We *don't* miss money much, you know," Strether added, "in general, in America, in pretty girls."

"No," she conceded; "but I know also what you do sometimes miss. And do you," she asked, "yourself admire her?"

It was a question, he indicated, that there might be several ways of taking; but he decided after an instant for the humorous. "Haven't I sufficiently showed you how I admire *any* pretty girl?"

Her interest in his problem was, however, by this time such that it scarce left her freedom, and she kept close to the facts. "I supposed that at Woollett you wanted them—what shall I call it?—blameless. I mean your young men for your pretty girls."

"So did I!" Strether confessed. "But you strike there a curious fact—the fact that Woollett too accommodates itself to the spirit of the age and the increasing mildness of manners. Everything changes, and I hold that our situation precisely marks a date. We *should* prefer them blameless, but we have to make the best of them as we find them. Since the spirit of the age and the increasing mildness send them so much more to Paris—"

"You've to take them back as they come. When they *do* come. *Bon!*" Once more she embraced it all, but she had a moment of thought. "Poor Chad!"

"Ah," said Strether cheerfully, "Mamie will save him!"

She was looking away, still in her vision, and she spoke with impatience and almost as if he hadn't understood her. "*You'll* save him. That's who'll save him."

"Oh, but with Mamie's aid. Unless indeed you mean," he added, "that I shall effect so much more with yours!"

It made her at last again look at him. "You'll do more—as you're so much better—than all of us put together."

"I think I'm only better since I've known *you!*" Strether bravely returned.

The depletion of the place, the shrinkage of the crowd and now comparatively quiet withdrawal of its last elements had already brought them nearer the door and put them in relation with a messenger of whom he bespoke Miss Gostrey's cab. But this left them a few minutes more, which she was clearly in no mood not to use. "You've spoken to me of what—by your success—Mr. Chad stands to gain. But you've not spoken to me of what you do."

"Oh, I've nothing more to gain," said Strether very simply.

She took it as even quite too simple. "You mean you've got it all 'down'? You've been paid in advance?"

"Ah, don't talk about payment!" he murmured.

Something in the tone of it pulled her up, but as their messenger still delayed she had another chance and she put it in another way. "What—by failure—do you stand to lose?"

He still, however, wouldn't have it. "Nothing!" he exclaimed, and on the messenger's at this instant reappearing he was able to sink the subject in their responsive advance. When, a few steps

up the street, under a lamp, he had put her into her four-wheeler and she had asked him if the man had called for him no second conveyance, he replied before the door was closed. "You won't take me with you?"

"Not for the world."

"Then I shall walk."

"In the rain?"

"I like the rain," said Strether. "Good-night!"

She kept him a moment, while his hand was on the door, by not answering; after which she answered by repeating her question. "What do you stand to lose?"

Why the question now affected him as other he couldn't have said; he could only, this time, meet it otherwise. "Everything."

"So I thought. Then you shall succeed. And to that end I'm yours—"

"Ah, dear lady!" he kindly breathed.

"Till death!" said Maria Gostrey. "Good-night."

V.

STRETHER called, his second morning in Paris, on the bankers, in the Rue Scribe, to whom his letter of credit was addressed, and he made this visit attended by Waymarsh, in whose company he had crossed from London two days before. They had hastened to the Rue Scribe on the morrow of their arrival, but Strether had not then found the letters the hope of which prompted this errand. He had had as yet none at all; had not expected them in London, but had counted on several in Paris, and now, disconcerted, had presently strolled back to the Boulevard with a sense of injury which he presently felt himself taking for as good a start as any other. It would serve, this spur to his spirit, he reflected, as, pausing at the top of the street, he looked up and down the great foreign avenue, it would serve to begin business with. His idea was to begin business immediately, and it did much for him the rest of that day that the beginning of business awaited him. He did little else, till night, but ask himself what he should do if he had not fortunately had so much to do; but he put himself the question in many different situations and connections. What carried him hither and yon was an admirable theory that nothing he could do would not be in some manner related to what he fundamentally had on hand, or *would* be—should he happen to have a scruple—wasted for it. He did happen to have a scruple—a scruple about taking no definite step till he should get letters; but this reasoning carried it off. A single day to feel his feet—he had felt them as yet only at Chester and in London—was, he could consider, none too much; and having, as he had often privately expressed it, Paris to reckon with, he threw these hours of freshness consciously into the reckoning. They made it continually greater, but that was what it

had best be if it was to be anything at all, and he gave himself up till far into the evening, at the theatre and on the return, after the theatre, along the bright, congested Boulevard, to feeling it grow. Waymarsh had accompanied him this time to the play, and the two men had walked together, as a first stage, from the Gymnase to the Café Riche, into the crowded "terrace" of which establishment—the night, or rather the morning, for midnight had struck, being bland and populous—they had wedged themselves for refreshment. Waymarsh, as a result of some discussion with his friend, had made a marked virtue of his having now let himself go; and there had been elements of impression in their half-hour over their watered beer-glasses that gave him his occasion for conveying that he held this compromise with his stiffer self to have become extreme. He conveyed it—for it was still, after all, his stiffer self that gloomed out of the glare of the terrace—in solemn silence; and there was indeed a great deal of critical silence, every way, between the companions, even till they gained the Place de l'Opéra, as to the character of their nocturnal progress.

This morning there *were* letters—letters which had reached London, apparently all together, the day of Strether's journey, and had taken their time to follow him; so that, after a controlled impulse to go into them in the reception-room of the bank, which, reminding him of the post-office at Woollett, affected him as the abutment of some transatlantic bridge, he slipped them into the pocket of his loose gray overcoat with a sense of the felicity of carrying them off. Waymarsh, who had had letters yesterday, had had them again to-day, and Waymarsh suggested, in this particular, no controlled impulses. The last one, clearly, at all events, he was likely to be observed to struggle with was that of bringing to a premature close any visit to the Rue Scribe. Strether had left him there yesterday; he wanted to see the papers, and he had spent, by what his friend could make out, a succession of hours with the papers. He spoke of the establishment, with emphasis, as a post of superior observation; just as he spoke generally of his actual damnable doom as a device for hiding from him what was going on. Europe was best described, to his mind, as an elaborate engine for dissociating the confined American from that indispensable knowledge, and was accordingly only rendered bearable by these occasional stations of relief, traps for the arrest of wandering western airs. Strether, on his side, set himself to walk again—he had his relief in his pocket; and indeed, much as he had desired his budget, the growth of restlessness might have been marked in him from the moment he had assured himself of the superscription of most of the missives it contained. This restlessness became therefore his temporary law; he ~~know~~ ~~he~~ should recognize as soon as he should see it the best place of all for settling down with his chief correspondent. He had for the next hour an accidental air of looking for it in the windows of shops; he came down the Rue de la Paix in the sun and, passing

across the Tuileries and the river, indulged more than once—as if on finding himself determined—in a sudden pause before the book-stalls of the opposite quay. In the garden of the Tuileries he had lingered, on two or three spots, to look; it was as if the wonderful Paris spring had stayed him as he roamed. The prompt Paris morning struck its cheerful notes—in a soft breeze and a sprinkled smell, in the light flit, over the garden-floor, of bareheaded girls with the buckled strap of oblong boxes, in the type of ancient thrifty persons basking betimes where terrace-walls were warm, in the blue-frocked, brass-labelled officialism of humble rakers and scrapers, in the deep references of a straight-pacing priest or the sharp ones of a white-gaitered, red-legged soldier. He watched little brisk figures, figures whose movement was as the tick of the great Paris clock, take their smooth diagonal from point to point; the air had a taste as of something mixed with art, something that presented nature as a white-capped master-*chef*. The palace was gone; Strether remembered the palace; and when he gazed into the irremediable void of its site the historic sense in him might have been freely at play—the play under which in Paris indeed it so often winces like a touched nerve. He filled out spaces with dim symbols of scenes; he caught the gleam of white statues at the base of which, with his letters out, he could tilt back a straw-bottomed chair. But his drift was, for reasons, to the other side, and it floated him unspent up the Rue de Seine and as far as the Luxembourg.

In the Luxembourg gardens he pulled up; here at last he found his nook, and here, on a penny chair from which terraces, alleys, vistas, fountains, little trees in green tubs, little women in white caps and shrill little girls at play all sunnily “composed” together, he passed an hour in which the cup of his impressions seemed truly to overflow. But a week had elapsed since he quitted the ship, and there were more things in his mind than so few days could account for. More than once, during the time, he had regarded himself as admonished; but the admonition, this morning, was formidably sharp. It took as it had not done yet the form of a question—the question of what he was doing with such an extraordinary sense of escape. This sense was sharpest after he had read his letters, but that was also precisely why the question pressed. Four of the letters were from Mrs. Newsome and none of them short; she had lost no time, had followed on his heels while he moved, so expressing herself that he now could measure the probable frequency with which he should hear. They would arrive, it would seem, her communications, at the rate of several a week; he should be able to count, it might even prove, on more than one by each mail. If he had begun yesterday with a small grievance he had therefore an opportunity to begin to-day with its opposite. He read the letters successively and slowly, putting others back into his pocket but keeping these for a long time afterwards gathered in his lap. He held them there, lost in thought, as if to prolong the presence of what

they gave him; or as if, at the least, to assure them their part in the constitution of some lucidity. His friend wrote admirably, and her tone was even more in her style than in her voice—it was almost as if, for the hour, he had had to come to this distance to get its full carrying quality; yet the enormity of his consciousness of difference consisted perfectly with the deepened intensity of the connection. It was the difference, the difference of being just where he was and *as* he was that formed the escape—this difference was so much greater than he had dreamed it would be; and what finally he sat there turning over was the strange logic of his finding himself so free. He felt it in a manner his duty to think out his state, to approve the process, and when he came in fact to trace the steps and add up the items they sufficiently accounted for the sum. He had never expected—that was the truth of it—again to find himself young, and all the years and other things it had taken to make him so were exactly his present arithmetic. He had to make sure of them to put his scruple to rest.

It all sprang at bottom from the beauty of Mrs. Newsome's desire that he should be worried with nothing that was not of the essence of his task; by insisting that he should thoroughly intermit and break she had so provided for his freedom that she would, as it were, have only herself to thank. Strether, however, could not at this point indeed have completed his thought by the image of what she might have to thank herself *for*: the image, at best, of his own likeness—poor Lambert Strether washed up on the sunny strand, thankful for breathing-time, stiffening himself while he gasped, by the waves of a single day. There he was, and there was nothing in his aspect or his posture to scandalize: it was only true that if he had seen Mrs. Newsome coming he would instinctively have jumped up to walk away a little. He would have come round and back to her bravely; but he would have had to pull himself together. She abounded in news of the situation at home, proved to him how perfectly she was arranging for his absence, told him who would take up this and who take up that exactly where he had left it, gave him in fact chapter and verse for the moral that nothing would suffer. It filled for him, this tone of hers, all the air; yet it struck him at the same time as the hum of vain things. This latter effect was what he tried to justify—and with the success that, grave though the appearance, he at last lighted on a form that was happy. He arrived at this form by the inevitable recognition of his having been a fortnight before one of the weariest of men. If ever a man had come off tired Lambert Strether was that man; and hadn't it been distinctly on the ground that he *was* tired that his wonderful friend at home had so felt for him and so contrived? It seemed to him somehow at these instants that, could he only maintain with sufficient firmness his grasp of this truth, it might become in a manner his compass and his helm. What he wanted most was some idea that would sim-

plify, and nothing would do that so much as the fact that he was done for and finished. If it had been in such a light that he had just detected in his cup the dregs of youth, that was a mere flaw of the surface of his scheme. He was so distinctly fagged-out that it must serve precisely as his convenience, and if he could but consistently be good for little enough he might do everything he wanted.

Everything he wanted was comprised moreover in a single boon—the common, unattainable art of taking things as they came. He appeared to himself to have given his best years to an active appreciation of the way they didn't come; but perhaps—as they would seemingly here be things quite other—this long ache might at last drop to rest. He could easily see that from the moment he should accept the notion of his foredoomed collapse the last thing he would lack would be reasons and memories. Oh, if he *should* do the sum, no slate would hold the figures! The fact that he had failed, as he considered, in everything, in each relation and in half a dozen trades, as he liked luxuriously to put it, might have made, might still make, for an empty present; but it stood solidly for a crowded past. It had not been, so much achievement missed, a light yoke nor a short road. It was at present as if the backward picture had hung there, the long crooked course, gray in the shadow of his solitude. It had been a dreadful, cheerful, sociable solitude, a solitude of life, of choice, of community; but though there had been people enough all round it, there had been but three or four persons *in* it. Waymarsh was one of these, and the fact struck him just now as marking the record. Mrs. Newsome was another, and Miss Gostrey had of a sudden shown signs of becoming a third. Beyond, behind them was the pale figure of his real youth, which held against its breast the two presences paler than itself—the young wife he had early lost and the young son he had stupidly sacrificed. He had again and again made out for himself that he might have kept his little boy, his little dull boy, who had died at school, of rapid diphtheria, if he had not in those years so insanely given himself to merely missing the mother. It was the soreness of his remorse that the child had, in all likelihood, not really been dull—had been dull, as he had been banished and neglected, mainly because the father had been unwittingly selfish. This was doubtless but the secret habit of sorrow, which had slowly given way to time; yet there remained an ache sharp enough to make the spirit, at the sight, now and again, of some fair young man just growing up, wince with the thought of an opportunity lost. Had ever a man, he had finally fallen into the way of asking himself, lost so much and even done so much for so little? There had been particular reasons why, all yesterday, beyond other days, he should have had in one ear this cold inquiry. His name on the green cover, where he had put it for Mrs. Newsome, expressed him doubtless just enough to make the world—the world as distinguished, both for more and for less, from Woollett—ask who he was. He had in-

curred the ridicule of having to have his explanation explained. He was Lambert Strether because he was on the cover, whereas it should have been, for anything like glory, that he was on the cover because he was Lambert Strether. He would have done anything for Mrs. Newsome, have been still more ridiculous—as he might, for that matter, have occasion to be yet; which came to saying that this acceptance of fate was all he had at fifty-five to show.

He judged the quantity as small because it *was* small, and all the more egregiously so since it couldn't, as he saw the case, so much as thinkably have been larger. He had not had the gift of making the most of what he tried, and if he had tried and tried again—no one but himself knew how often—it appeared to have been that he might demonstrate what else, in default of that, *could* be made. Old ghosts of experiments came back to him, old drudgeries and delusions and disgusts, old recoveries with their relapses, old fevers with their chills, broken moments of good faith, others of still better doubt; adventures, for the most part, of the sort qualified as lessons. The special spring that had constantly played for him the day before was the recognition—frequent enough to surprise him—of the promises to himself that, after his other visit, he had never kept. The reminiscence that to-day most revived for him was that of the vow taken in the course of the pilgrimage that, newly-married, with the War just over, and helplessly young in spite of it, he had recklessly made with the creature who was so much younger still. It had been a bold dash, for which they had taken money set apart for necessities, but consecrated for them at the moment in a hundred ways, and in none more so than by this private pledge of his own to treat the occasion as a relation formed with the higher culture, to see that, as they said at Woollett, it should bear a good harvest. He had believed, as he sailed home again, that he had gained something great, and his theory—with an elaborate, innocent plan of reading, digesting, coming back, even, every few years—had then been to preserve, cherish and extend it. As such plans as these had come to nothing, however, in respect to acquisitions still more precious, it was doubtless little enough of a marvel that he should have lost account of that handful of seed. Buried for long years in dark corners, at any rate, these few germs had sprouted again under forty-eight hours of Paris. The process of yesterday had really been the process of feeling the general stirred life of connections long since individually dropped. Strether had become acquainted even on this ground with short gusts of speculation—sudden flights of fancy in Louvre galleries, hungry gazes through clear plates behind which lemon-colored volumes were as fresh as fruit on the tree.

These were instants at which he could ask whether, since there had been, fundamentally, so little question of his keeping anything, the fate after all decreed for him hadn't been only to *be* kept. Kept for something, in that event, that he didn't pretend, didn't

possibly dare, as yet, to divine; something that made him hover and wonder and laugh and sigh, made him advance and retreat, feeling half ashamed of his impulse to plunge and more than half afraid of his impulse to wait. He remembered for instance how he had gone back in the sixties with lemon-colored volumes in general on the brain as well as with a dozen—selected for his wife too—in his trunk; and nothing had at the moment shown more confidence than this invocation of the finer taste. They were still somewhere at home, the dozen—stale and soiled and never sent to the binder; but what had become of the sharp initiation they represented? They represented now the mere sallow paint on the door of the temple of taste that he had dreamed of raising up—a structure that he had practically never carried further. Strether's present highest flights were perhaps those in which this particular lapse figured to him as a symbol, a symbol of his long grind and his want of odd moments, his want moreover of money, of opportunity, of positive dignity. That the memory of the vow of his youth should, in order to throb again, have had to wait for this last, as he felt it, of all his accidents—that was surely proof enough of how his conscience had been encumbered. If any further proof were needed it would have been to be found in the fact that, as he perfectly now saw, he had ceased even to measure his meagreness, a meagreness that sprawled, in this retrospect, vague and comprehensive, stretching back like some unmapped Hinterland from a rough coast-settlement. His conscience had been amusing itself, for the forty-eight hours, by forbidding him the purchase of a book; he held off from that, held off from everything; from the moment he didn't yet call on Chad he wouldn't for the world have taken any other step. On this evidence, however, of the way they actually affected him, he glared at the lemon-colored covers with the fancy of the sub-consciousness that, all the same, in the great desert of the years, he must have had of them. The green covers at home comprised, by the law of their purpose, no tribute to letters; it was of a mere rich kernel of economics, politics, ethics that, glazed and, as Mrs. Newsome maintained, rather against *his* view, pre-eminently pleasant to touch, they formed the specious shell. Without, therefore, any needed instinctive knowledge of what was coming out, in Paris, on the bright highway, he struck himself at present as having more than once flushed with a suspicion: he couldn't otherwise at present be feeling so many fears confirmed. There were "movements" he was too late for—weren't they, with the fun of them, already spent? There were sequences he had missed and great gaps in the procession: he might have been watching it all recede in a golden cloud of dust. If the playhouse was not closed, his seat at least had fallen to somebody else. He had had an uneasy feeling the night before that if he was at the theatre at all—though he indeed justified the theatre, in the specific sense, and with a grotesqueness to which his imagination did all

honor, as something he owed poor Waymarsh—he should have been there with, and as might have been said, *for* Chad.

He pulled himself then at last together for his own progress back; not with the feeling that he had taken his walk in vain. He prolonged it a little, in the immediate neighborhood, after he had quitted his chair; and the upshot of the whole morning for him was that his campaign had begun. He had wanted to put himself in relation, and he would be hanged if he were *not* in relation. He was at no moment so much so as while, under the old arches of the Odéon, he lingered before the charming open-air array of literature classic and casual. He thought the effect of tone and tint, in the long charged tables and shelves, delicate and appetizing; the impression—substituting one kind of low-priced *consommation* for another—might have been that of one of the pleasant cafés that overlapped, under an awning, to the pavement; but he edged along, grazing the tables, with his hands firmly behind him. He wasn't there to dip, to consume—he was there to reconstruct. He wasn't there for his own profit—not, that is, the direct; he was there on some chance of feeling the brush of the wing of the stray spirit of youth. He felt it in fact, he had it beside him; the old arcade indeed, as his inner sense listened, gave out the faint sound, as from far-off, of the wild waving of wings. They were folded now over the breasts of buried generations; but a flutter or two lived again in the turned page of shock-headed, slouch-hatted loiterers whose young intensity of type, in the direction of pale acuteness, deepened his vision, and even his appreciation, of racial differences, and whose manipulation of the uncut volume was too often, however, but a listening at closed doors. He reconstructed a possible groping Chad of three or four years before, a Chad who had, after all, simply—for that was the only way to see it—been too vulgar for his privilege. Surely it *was* a privilege to have been young and happy just there. Well, the best thing Strether knew of him was that he had had such a dream.

But his own actual business, half an hour later, was with a third floor on the Boulevard Malesherbes—so much as that was definite; and the fact of the enjoyment by the third-floor windows of a continuous balcony, to which he was helped by this knowledge, had perhaps something to do with his lingering for five minutes on the opposite side of the street. There were points as to which he had quite made up his mind, and one of these bore precisely on the wisdom of the abruptness to which events had finally committed him, a policy that he was pleased to find not at all shaken as he now looked at his watch and wondered. He *had* announced himself—six months before; had written out, at least, that Chad was not to be surprised should he see him some day turn up. Chad had thereupon, in a few words of rather carefully colorless answer, offered him a general welcome; and Strether, ruefully reflecting that he might have understood the warning as a hint to hospitality,

a bid for an invitation, had fallen back upon silence as the corrective most to his own taste. He had asked Mrs. Newsome moreover not to announce him again; he had so distinct an opinion on attacking his job, should he attack it at all, in his own way. Not the least of this lady's high merits for him was that he could absolutely rest on her word. She was the only woman he had known, even at Woollett, as to whom his conviction was positive that to lie was beyond her art. Sarah Pocock, for instance, her own daughter, though with social ideals, as they said, in some respects different—Sarah who *was*, in her way, æsthetic, had never refused to human commerce that mitigation of rigor; there were occasions when he had distinctly seen her apply it. Since, accordingly, at all events, he had had it from Mrs. Newsome that she had, at whatever cost to her more strenuous view, conformed, in the matter of preparing Chad, wholly to his restrictions, he now looked up at the fine continuous balcony with a safe sense that if the case had been bungled the mistake was at least his property. Was there perhaps just a suspicion of that in his present pause on the edge of the Boulevard and well in the pleasant light?

Many things came over him here, and one of them was that he should doubtless presently know whether he had been shallow or sharp. Another was that the balcony in question didn't somehow show as a convenience easy to surrender. Poor Strether had at this very moment to recognize the truth that, wherever one paused in Paris, the imagination, before one could stop it, reacted. This perpetual reaction put a price, if one would, on pauses; but it piled up consequences till there was scarce room to pick one's steps among them. What call had he, at such a juncture, for instance, to like Chad's very house? High, broad, clear—he was expert enough to make out in a moment that it was admirably built—it fairly embarrassed our friend by the quality that, as he would have said, it “sprang” on him. He had struck off the fancy that it might, as a preliminary, be of service to him to be seen, by a happy accident, from the third-story windows, which took all the March sun; but of what service was it to find himself making out after a moment that the quality “sprung,” the quality produced by measure and balance, the fine relation of part to part and space to space, was probably—aided by the presence of ornament as positive as it was discreet, and by the complexion of the stone, a cold, fair gray, warmed and polished a little by life—neither more nor less than a case of distinction, such a case as he could only feel, unexpectedly, as a sort of delivered challenge? Meanwhile, however, the chance he had allowed for—the chance of being seen, in time, from the balcony—had become a fact. Two or three of the windows stood open to the violet air; and, before Strether had cut the knot by crossing, a young man had come out and looked about him, had lighted a cigarette and tossed the match over, and then, resting on the rail, had given himself up, while he smoked, to watching the

life below. His arrival contributed, in its order, to keeping Strether in position; the result of which, in turn, was that Strether soon felt himself noticed. The young man began to look at him as in acknowledgment of his being himself in observation.

This was interesting so far as it went, but the interest was affected by the young man's not being Chad. Strether wondered at first if he were perhaps Chad altered; then he saw that this was asking too much of alteration. The young man was light, bright and alert—with an air too pleasant to have been arrived at by patching. Strether had conceived Chad as patched, but not beyond recognition. He was in presence, he felt, of amendments enough as they stood; it was a sufficient amendment that the gentleman up there should be Chad's friend. He was young too then, the gentleman up there—he was very young; young enough, apparently, to be amused at an elderly watcher, to be curious even to see what the elderly watcher would do on finding himself watched. There was youth in that, there was youth in the surrender to the balcony, there was youth, for Strether, at this moment, in everything but his own business; and Chad's thus pronounced association with youth had given, the next instant, an extraordinary quick lift to the issue. The balcony, the distinguished front testified suddenly, for Strether's fancy, to something that was up and up; they placed the whole case materially, and as by an admirable image, on a level that he found himself at the end of another moment rejoicing to think he might reach. The young man looked at him still; he looked at the young man; and the issue, by a rapid process, was that this knowledge of a perched privacy appeared to him the last of luxuries. To him too the perched privacy was open, and he saw it now but in one light—that of the only domicile, the only fireside in the great ironic city on which he had the shadow of a claim. Miss Gostrey had a fireside; she had told him of it, and it was something that doubtless awaited him; but Miss Gostrey had not yet arrived—she mightn't arrive for days; and the sole attenuation of his excluded state was his vision of the small, the admittedly secondary hotel in the by-street from the Rue de la Paix, in which her solicitude for his purse had placed him, which affected him somehow as all in-door chill, glass-roofed court and slippery staircase, and which was, by the same token, pervaded by Waymarsh even at times when Waymarsh might have been certain to be round at the bank. It came to pass before he moved that Waymarsh, and Waymarsh alone, Waymarsh not only undiluted but positively strengthened, struck him as the present alternative to the young man in the balcony. When he did move it was fairly to escape that alternative. Taking his way over the street at last and passing through the *porte-cochère* of the house was like consciously leaving Waymarsh out. However, he would tell him all about it.

(To be continued.)